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int bookstore severe woman reading her poems, we don't hear the words at first . The couple starts by whispering but emotion carries them into higher registers.

Female Victim (sobs) But you used to!

Female Patsy (comforting) Now now.

Female Victim How quickly people forget.

Female Patsy I am not people.

Female Victim Might as well be.

POET I AM NOT THE PERSON YOU LOVED AND LOVE
That person, as I said, is dead.

Female Patsy Too ridiculous.

Female Victim Well it means a lot to me!

Poet my rebirth has sexualized the universe!

The Times reported it in verse!

Female Patsy Out of the question.

Poet Men, of course, get worse.

Female Victim Why live? Why even live?

Female Patsy Now now.

POET I thought of suicide

but how

could I go on

hating?

Female Victim Such a small thing I ask. So small!

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim I would.

Female Patsy No longer appropriate, that's all. Not that it was wrong when--

Female Victim Appropriate! Great God! Was Romeo and Juliet appropriate?

Patsy: We're a couple of Juliets. Maybe that's the trouble.

Plain vanilla. Anyway, she never paid a bill, for one thing.

Victim: Appropriate? How can you even say that? Get the word into your mouth?

Female Patsy Easily.

Female Victim And what I'm asking isn't easy?

Female Patsy Right now I couldn't think of anything more difficult or more ridiculous.

Female Victim Shit! I've just been fooling myself. You don't love me and never have.

Female Patsy Perhaps. That is...of course I--some moments I sincerely do and at others--?

Female Victim Unconstant in a wink and therefore fickle forever!

Female Patsy Not heard that.

Female Victim I made it up!

Female Patsy Not bad.

Female Victim Fritter fritter fritter. Oh yes! To your advantage. The delay card, always the delay card.

Female Patsy Now now. Why don't we just listen. This woman could get the Nobel Prize someday if she butches up a bit.

Female Victim Please?

Female Patsy You know my feeling on this. What was appropriate, what seemed right, uh, before, now simply isn't. How much of an asshole do you want? People move on!

Female Victim You'd say Love is an asshole!

POET: LOVE IS AN ASSHOLE!

Female Patsy Now now. Uh, run that by me again, will you?

Female Victim Fuck you!

Female Patsy Very well then, fuck me.

Female Victim And not in the way you mean.

Female Patsy I don't mean it in the way that I mean.

POET: HOW CAN WE KNOW WHAT WE MEAN? Sad!

Life being ever a scene, bad!

How can we mean what we mean without them.

We took their balls away and now don't want them.

Female Victim Language! Your downfall! Thinking that it means anything.

Female Patsy Caught you in a paradox there. What you want me to say means volumes evidently, and yet language itself means nothing, from Shakespeare to PLAYGIRL.

Female Victim (frosty) I wouldn't know.

Poet Be my playgirl playboy plaything. Thing.
That'll do.

Anything not true.

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim (Cracking) Jesus Christ! Do you want all my dignity? Don't you realize I'm out here with my very heart on the block, that I've gone too far out. Please, leave me some little self respect! Please! (sinks to floor) I am begging you! (thrashing about the floor) Begging you!

Female Patsy (avoiding pursuit while appealing with several now-now pantomimes for poet's response)

POET: Now now! Some things we can't allow, you see.

Insufficiently literary.
Female Victim (all but tackling PATSY) Well? (retching)
Female Patsy Oh very well!
Female Victim (leaping up, considerably brightened) Yes!
Yes!
Female Patsy (muttered) You are my--
Female Victim Speak up! Don't always mumble!
Female Patsy (inaudible)
Female Victim Whaaaaaa?
Female Patsy I said...you are my Bumpty-Wumpy.

POET APPLAUDS

Say it!
Don't forever play it!

Female Victim (collapsing) But like a DENTist I had to--
Likea dentist...ex-TRACTING! Just to save the smallest sliver
of face! A dentist! The tiniest, WINE-EEEEEEEEEE-ist
slivvvvvvvvvv-er
of face! (inarticulate whining follows)
Female Patsy (at wits end implores POET to now now)
POET: NOW! And don't again bend,
for all these books are full of dead white men.

2 int bed shorty nightgowns, silver champaigne bucket,
Chinese food being handed them by deliveryman.

Female Victim Has it been a year?
Female Patsy (toastng empty glass) Reason for all this, hah!,
expensive food.
Female Victim All China wouldn't be enough--what I put up with.
Female Patsy (spins bottle in bucket) Uh, um, yes, uh, more
champaigne, dear?
Female Victim Not trying to get me drunk? Of course you don't
have to anymore. Performance on demand, isn't that it? None of
the playing, and the lovely Bumpty Wumpy I so loved. Never more
of that of course.
Deliveryman: Who Humby Bumby?
Female Patsy I must've come in late.
Female Victim Just because we're ... doesn't lift the
obligation of...to--
Female Patsy I'm missing something. Gifts you mean?
Hallmark? Deliveryman Who get egg foo yung?
Patsy (cont) Pagoda shaped dildo? What?
Female Victim I mean an attitude! (racking sobs)

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim (continues a sort of combined crying and inarticulate whining, and so PATSY, draining glass, exhorts deliveryman to now-now)

Deliveryman Now now in intonation levels a la Chinese language.

General Wang Chicken?

Both: We've given up on General Wangs.

Victim I've given everything up!

Patsy and deliveryman Now now now. He starts feeding Victim.

3

Marcus for Congress A woman for a change! They've been making signs. with Marcus.

Female Victim (frantically paging through book) Why should we trust this Dr Spock? He probably wants to make all the babies Communist or something!

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim Wha--what am I looking up here? You made me forget.

Female Patsy Now now just take it easy.

Female Victim Easy for you to say. You just bebop through life and I'm left--

Female Patsy Green.

Marcus God!

Female Victim Ugh!Female Patsy Well it looked green.

Female Victim Green what?

Female Patsy Vomit, diar--

Marcus runs off.

Female Victim Which one goddammit. You are infuriating as always!

Female Patsy Now now. It's probably normal.

Female Victim Well you're not!

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim My life is going out the window! Out the fuckin window and into the toilet! (Marcus enters from toilet, flush practically interminable as she becomes more and more embarrassed; one sign features whitefaced clown with blinking red lightbulb nose, cut from this to Marcus who blinks redder and redder)

Female Patsy Impossible. Uh, spacially. Not logical. 'd have to come back INto the window in order to

Female Victim (aside) Only a couple of years and this boring! examining Marcus circles PATSY carrying different sign

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim ExHAUSted all the goddamn time and you're no help! Is this a murder plot? Have you come that far? Push the

kid onto me and then watch me disintegrate until--

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim I can't take it anymore. I can't! The baby's defective and the relationship is worse. And I'm gone. I'm really gone!

Female Patsy (starts exhorting Marcus to nownow.)

Female Victim (to chorus) No no! I mean it. I'm-- I-- I-- I have to get out of here or lose what little sanity--(throws hands to face and trembles)

Female Patsy Now now now now now! (exhorts Marcus for more now-nows. She responds by marching brightly around with sign.)

Marcus (again brightly) Now now etc. to a martial beat)

4 ext they pedal tandem bike though golden fall

Female Victim If it's Consolidated comes in, and not Allied, then I'm gone for sure.

Female Patsy Now now. It's not that bad. I saw Lots of ads in the paper back at the B & B.

Female Victim Propaganda I tell you! Did you know that the youngsters at work call me the old timer? Jesus Christ I'm losing it! I gave my fuckin youth to this lousy relationship and that stupid company!

Female Patsy Now now.

Female Victim What an asshole!

Female Patsy Please. No name-calling. Remember what the counselor told us.

Female Victim I'm the asshole! Sacrificing so so much for that company and for what? So they could get a deal! Selling it to somebody who'll fire me outright! And they stole the whole fuckin pension plan I contributed to, and they're saying not toworry, that they just reallocated the funds.

Female Patsy Now now. It's only money.

Female Victim Huh! They piss in your pocket and tell you you're sweating!

Female Patsy Are they really that unhygenic?

Female Victim And the whole crazy business back in our insane house is just a mirror image of the outside. You're screwed every moment of your life! You're screwed every moment of your life!

Female Patsy Just lucky I guess. Keep pumping.

Female Victim That does it! I'm getting out and this time I mean it!

Female Patsy Not now.

Female Victim Yeah! Uh huh!

They pump faster and faster as scenery blurs , and then another couple flies by on tandem, shrieking Now nows.

Female Victim (shrieking after them) You all know what you can do with your stupid now nows!

5 Female Victim alone, w potted palm. Gets, up , waters it. Uniformed exterminator is spraying corners of room.

Enter Hippie (young same sex live-in) eating from a can and then throwing can away. Exterminator sprays can.

Female Victim As I was saying, that person--

Female Hippie (burps, wipes face on sleeve) Yeah...like well it's tough.

Female Victim --took my dignity away. I begged and begged. Until I became less than human.

Female Hippie Yeah, uh, like--

Female Victim Believe me there was no extent I wouldn't go to. It became harrowing and ultimately disgusting. Ugh! Just disgusting! Ihhhh! Slime you turn into! Doormat! Wipe your feet on me, or or or anything more disgusting.

Female Hippie Yeah like well it's tough.

Female Victim My life is gone. Gone! Kaput! I've ruined it. I mean it was ruined for me. A lot of people cooperated on that little project, you can bet your ass on that one! Not just old whatshername.

Female Hippie Yeah like well it's tough.

Female Victim And what...was left? The horrible, insidious memories of COMFORTING! (Here a manic walk in which now-nows in every possible intonation are mocked.) Now now (etc)

Exterminator in rhythm with each spray Now now etc

Female Victim (breathless) Such minimal, miserable attempts at being a human being! (to Exterminator) Such minimal, miserable attempts at being a human being!

Exterminator Bugs I deal with.

Female Hippie Yeah...well, like I said, it's tough.

Female Victim And what's left? What's left now? (clumps down to knees) Oh Sweet Merciful God, what is left?

Female Hippie You got any fuckin money?

Exterminator sprays hippie.